

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER COOPERATIVE APARTMENTS  
other names/site number (VDHR File Number 000-9417)

2. Location

street & number 1300-1362 South Rolfe Street, 1707-1735 13th Road South, and 1324-1330 South Queen Street not for publication N/A  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity N/A  
state Virginia code VA county Arlington code 013  
zip code 22204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.		
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.		
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply):

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box):

- ☐ building(s)
- ☒ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>9</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>9</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.):  
Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia: 1934-1954

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Cat: DOMESTIC	Sub: multiple dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Cat: DOMESTIC	Sub: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions):

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials (Enter categories from instructions):

foundation:	NOT VISIBLE
roof:	ASPHALT
walls:	SYNTHETIC: (simulated masonry)
	STUCCO
other:	BRICK

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- |                                     |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | D | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.  |

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- |                          |   |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | removed from its original location.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C | a birthplace or a grave.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D | a cemetery.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F | a commemorative property.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: black

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1945-1954

Significant Dates

1945

1949

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

CASSELL, ALBERT I.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 3.35 Acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet):

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1)	18	3/19/963	43/03/378	3)	18	3/20/028	43/03/365
2)	18	3/20/017	43/03/396	4)	18	3/20/112	43/03/371
X See continuation sheet.							

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura V. Trieschmann and Gerald M. Maready, Jr., Architectural Historians  
organization EHT Traceries, Inc. date July 2003  
street & number 1121 Fifth Street, NW telephone 202-393-1199  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name				George Washington Carver Mutual Homes Association				
street & number		1106 South Rolfe Street			telephone			
city or town		Arlington		state		VA	zip code	22204

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 “C” Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
Arlington, Virginia**

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

The George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments sit on a 3.35-acre plot located approximately three miles from the District of Columbia, in the Arlington View neighborhood in southern Arlington County, Virginia. The site is bounded on the west by South Rolfe Street, on the east by South Queen Street, and on the south by 13th Road South. The Hoffman-Boston Elementary School – at various times both a junior and senior high school designated for Arlington County’s African Americans – was built in 1915, and is located diagonally across from the Carver Apartments at South Queen Street and 13th Road South.<sup>1</sup> The Carver Apartments are approximately a quarter of a mile south of Columbia Pike, a major route through Arlington County that stretches westward to Fairfax County, Virginia. Additionally, the Carver Apartments are located just a mile to the west of the Pentagon, the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense, a fact that figures importantly in their history.

The complex is comprised of eight multiple dwellings and one administration building placed in a park-like setting, thus conforming to the garden apartment type common throughout the United States – and Arlington County – in the mid-twentieth century. There is an off-street parking area behind the buildings, hidden from view of the street, reinforcing the park-like atmosphere. Visually, the buildings that make up the Carver Apartments are identical, and demonstrate a loose allegiance to the ideals of Modernism.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

**Site**

According to the 1938 Franklin Survey Map of Arlington County, the 3.35-acre tract on which the Carver Apartments were built was originally a farm belonging to Elhaney Green and his family.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Green was primarily engaged in raising hogs, and lived on the farm with his family.<sup>3</sup> On the 1938 map, Green’s farm is located south of Gray’s Subdivision, which was the location of the farm of Harry Gray, a member of a locally prominent African American family. The Harry Gray house still stands at the corner of South Quinn Street and 10th Street South. Elhaney Green’s farmhouse, which appears on the 1936 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, is no longer extant.<sup>4</sup> This part of Arlington County – now called Arlington View – was known as Johnson’s Hill, and was an historically African American enclave.

The site of the Carver Apartments appears to be, on the street side of the complex, essentially flat and even. Behind the complex however, the terrain is more varied, with a large rise in the center of the site, enclosed by the apartment buildings and the asphalt-paved parking lot. Overall, from west to east, across the complex, the site drops about 15 feet. From south to north, however, the site rises. From 13th Road South to Columbia Pike, along the route of South Queen Street, the terrain rises about 40 feet. There are few large trees on the site, and the plantings consist primarily of shrubbery and small trees at the foundations of the buildings. Concrete sidewalks link the buildings to each other and the parking lot. Otherwise, the landscape is open and grassy.

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1 “About Our School,” *Hoffman-Boston Elementary School* (Arlington, VA: Arlington County Public Schools, v. 4.2, 2003 [cited 14 July 2003]) found at <<http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/hoffmanboston/school/index.html>>.

2 *Franklin’s Original “Han-dy Size” Property Atlas, Including Territory Embraced in Franklin’s Standard Atlas: Arlington County, Virginia* (Philadelphia: Franklin Survey Company, 1938), plate 17A.

3 United States Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920-Population, State: Virginia, County, Alexandria, Township, Jefferson District, Enumeration District 14, Supervisor’s District 8, Sheet 2B, Johnson’s Hill: Alhaney Green* (Washington, DC, 1920). Also: United States Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule, State: Virginia, County: Arlington, Township: Jefferson District, Enumeration District 7-15, Supervisor’s District 2, Sheet 8A, Columbia Pike: Alhaynna Greene* (Washington, DC, 1930).

4 Fire insurance map of *Arlington County, Virginia, 1936* (NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1936) plate 53.

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
Arlington, Virginia**

**Buildings**

The eight multiple dwellings that make up the Carver Apartments are rectangular structures containing between four and six residences. The dwellings are two stories, and each entry corresponds to one residence. The entries at the ends of the buildings are paired. The majority of these buildings are situated so that they form a courtyard with the adjacent buildings. The buildings located at 1300-1310 South Rolfe Street, 1312-1322 South Rolfe Street, and 1324-1334 South Rolfe Street form a U-shaped enclosure for a courtyard. The buildings located at 1344-1354 South Rolfe Street and at 1356-1362 South Rolfe Street form an L-shaped enclosure for a courtyard. The remaining three multiple dwellings – 1725-1735 13th Road South, 1707-1717 13th Road South, and 1324-1330 South Queen Street – front directly on the street. The administration building is located on the edge of the asphalt parking lot, behind the apartment buildings.

Stylistically, the Carver Apartments loosely interpret the tenets of Modernism. They make use of mass-produced materials (i.e., ones that were affordable and readily available): cinder blocks, sash windows, and brick.<sup>5</sup> There is no applied exterior decoration and, prior to the application of Perma-Stone® in 1956, the structural materials were clearly expressed. The primary departure from Modern influences are the side-gabled roofs, which gives the buildings a more familiar and traditional form. Modernist beliefs were not, however, the only inspiration for the design of the Carver Apartments. They also incorporate the ideas regarding form and setting diffused by the Garden City movement. The complex is designed as a superblock, there is a clear separation of pedestrians and automobiles, and the majority of the buildings are grouped around courtyards. The exterior cladding of the Carver Apartments consists of Perma-Stone® on the first story, and pink-colored stucco on the second story. Above each entry is an asymmetrical ornamental block of Perma-Stone® in the midst of the stucco, as if it had been stuccoed over, and then uncovered. At the corners, Perma-Stone® is used to form rough quoins in the second story. The buildings are capped by side-gabled roofs sheathed in asphalt shingles, and have overhanging eaves. The façade fenestration is symmetrical, and comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. The number of windows on the façade varies with the number of dwellings in the building. In the six-unit buildings, there are six sets of paired windows and one single window on both the first and second stories. The four-unit buildings have four sets of paired windows on both first and second floors. The side elevations are devoid of fenestration. There are four stretcher-bond brick chimneys – two exterior end and two interior – on the six-unit buildings, while there are only three on the four-unit buildings. Projecting brick surrounds mark the entries, which are sheltered by metal canopies. The canopies at the paired end entries are two bays wide, while the others are a single bay each. At each entry, there is a low poured concrete stoop.

The one-story administration building is clad in the same manner as the dwellings, with Perma-Stone® on the first story, and pink stucco in the gable ends. It is a rectangular building, capped by a front-gabled roof. The peak of the roof is not centered on the building, so the pitch is steeper on the north end of the building than it is on the south end. There are two entries, and one window in this structure. The two entries are side-by-side, although not so close that they appear paired. One entry has a paneled wood door, and the other entry has a metal storm door with a single large plate-glass light. The window has a 1/1 vinyl sash, and has a window-unit air conditioner in the lower half. The northernmost entry has a poured concrete ramp, while the southernmost one has a poured concrete stoop. The most distinctive feature of this structure is the oversized corbeled five-course American bond brick chimney on the rear.

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<sup>5</sup> As an example: “in 1917 F.J. Straub patented cinder blocks and in 1919 established a plant in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In its first year it produced 25,000 cinder blocks, but by 1926 Straub was making more than 70 million blocks annually.” Pamela H. Simpson, Harry J. Hunderman, Deborah Slaton, “Concrete Block,” in *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, ed. Thomas C. Jester (NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 1995) 82.



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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
Arlington, Virginia**

The appearance of the Carver Apartments has changed little since the time of their construction. In July 1956, Perma-Stone<sup>®</sup> was applied to the first-story exterior of the buildings, while stucco was applied to the second story.<sup>6</sup> Before that time, the structural cinder blocks were clearly visible. In February 1982, the existing canopies were re-roofed, changing their profile from flat to a low-pitched front gable.<sup>7</sup> These seem to be the only substantive changes to the appearance of the Carver Apartments. There have been no additions or subtractions from the essential form of the buildings and the complex, which is so characteristic of garden apartments. The fundamental structural and design integrity of these multiple dwellings remain intact from the time of their construction.

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<sup>6</sup> Arlington County Department of Inspections: Building Division, *House Numbers and Street Names: George Washington Carver Homes* (Arlington, VA: 1956).

<sup>7</sup> Arlington County Department of Inspections, *House Numbers: George Washington Carver Homes*.

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
Arlington, Virginia  
Historic District Inventory Report**

**13th Road South**

**1707-1717 13th Road South              000-9417-0007**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story, eleven-bay dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are four brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings, the end ones of which cover two entries, and are thus two bays wide. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**1725-1735 13th Road South              000-9417-0006**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story, eleven-bay dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are four brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings, the end ones of which cover two entries, and are thus two bays wide. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**South Queen Street**

**1324-1330 South Queen Street              000-9417-0008**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are three brick chimneys. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**South Rolfe Street**

**1300-1310 South Rolfe Street              000-9417-0001**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story, eleven-bay dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are four brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings, the end ones of which cover two entries, and are thus two bays wide. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**1312-1322 South Rolfe Street              000-9417-0002**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story, eleven-bay dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are four brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings, the end ones of which cover two entries, and are thus two bays wide. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
Arlington, Virginia  
Historic District Inventory Report**

**1324-1334 South Rolfe Street      000-9417-0003**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story, eleven-bay dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are four brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings, the end ones of which cover two entries, and are thus two bays wide. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**1340 South Rolfe Street      000-9417-0009**

*Primary Resource Information:* Administration Bldg., Stories 1.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This one-story, three-bay structure is faced with simulated masonry, and with pink-colored stucco in the attic level, matching the apartment buildings in the complex. It is capped by a front-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. The peak of the roof is not centered, but is shifted toward the north end of the building, thus causing the pitch of the roof to be steeper on that end. Fenestration is comprised of one 1/1 vinyl sash window. There is one oversized brick chimney on the rear exterior of the building. The structure has two entries, side-by-side, one with a poured concrete ramp leading to it, and one with a poured concrete stoop and steps.

*Individual Resource Status:* Administration Bldg. Contributing

**1344-1354 South Rolfe Street      000-9417-0004**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story, eleven-bay dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are four brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings, the end ones of which cover two entries, and are thus two bays wide. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**1356-1362 South Rolfe Street      000-9417-0005**

*Primary Resource Information:* Multiple dwelling, Stories 2.00, Style: Modern Movement, ca 1945

This two-story dwelling is faced with simulated masonry on the first story, pink-colored stucco on the second story, and is capped by a side-gabled roof sheathed in asphalt shingles. Fenestration is comprised of 1/1 vinyl sash windows, the majority of which are paired. There are three brick chimneys, two exterior end, and two interior. The dwelling is further defined by stoops sheltered by metal awnings. Projecting brick surrounds further distinguish the entries.

*Individual Resource Status:* Multiple dwelling Contributing

**Total Number of Resources:      9**

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
Arlington, Virginia**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary Statement**

The George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments, built in 1945, are the most recent incarnation of the housing provided by the federal government for Arlington County's African Americans since the founding of the Freedman's Village in 1863. With the government's dissolution of the village in the late 1890s, its occupants dispersed throughout the county, settling in nearby neighborhoods such as East Arlington, Queen City, and Johnson's Hill, now known as Arlington View. In 1941-1942, the neighborhoods of East Arlington and Queen City disappeared under the Pentagon, the Navy Annex, and the tangle of roadways in the area, dislocating Arlington County's African Americans once again. The federal government built the Carver Apartments for the residents displaced from these neighborhoods. Prominent African American architect Albert I. Cassell designed the garden apartments, an architectural type dominant in mid-twentieth-century Arlington County and throughout the United States. The Carver Apartments have been a wholly African American owned and occupied cooperative since the residents bought the complex from the federal government in 1949.

The Carver Apartments, with a period of significance extending from 1945 to 1954, are eligible under criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places. Reflecting the themes of Architecture, Community Planning and Development, and black Ethnic Heritage, the Carver Apartments are a planned garden apartment complex designed by African American architect Albert I. Cassell. The George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments are comprised of eight multiple dwellings and one administration building, resulting in nine contributing resources.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

**Arlington County**

Arlington is a twenty-six-square-mile county located in northern Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The county is now bounded by Fairfax County to the north and west, the city of Alexandria to the south, and the Potomac River to the east. In 1801, the Commonwealth of Virginia ceded what became known as Alexandria County to the nascent District of Columbia.<sup>8</sup> The county then consisted of approximately thirty-two square miles. It contained the town of Alexandria, and a substantial rural section that eventually was to become Arlington County. The rural part of the county was improved by just a few large plantations during this period, most notably the Alexander-Custis plantation, known as Abingdon, and the George Washington Parke Custis plantation, known as Arlington House. The remainder of the cultivated land was worked by small-scale farmers. The population of Alexandria County continued to increase in the early nineteenth century, but the majority of the county's inhabitants remained concentrated in Alexandria. Even after the federal government retroceded Alexandria County to the Commonwealth of Virginia following a referendum among its citizens in 1846-1847, Alexandria City remained the area's center of commerce, trade, and domestic development.

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<sup>8</sup> Of the 4,971 people living in the town of Alexandria, 875 were slaves. Of the 978 living in the country, 297 were slaves. Arlington County Bicentennial Commission, *Historic Arlington*, Rev. ed. (Arlington, VA: Arlington County Historical Commission, 1976) 3.

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Arlington, Virginia**

After the Civil War (1861-1865) and during the Reconstruction era (1865-1877), the area now known as Arlington continued to grow, in both population and importance. The Commonwealth of Virginia adopted a new constitution in 1870, which established counties and larger cities as separate jurisdictions.<sup>9</sup> Alexandria County and City were no longer politically connected and consequently, in 1898, the county seat was moved from Alexandria City to the site of the present-day Arlington Courthouse.<sup>10</sup> Despite growth in the county, G.M. Hopkins's *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia*, published in 1879, documented just a handful of commercial establishments and a few blacksmith shops in the rural part of Alexandria County, demonstrating its continued reliance upon agricultural pursuits.<sup>11</sup>

After the turn of the twentieth century, the demographics of Alexandria County began to change more rapidly. Between 1870 and 1900, the number of residents grew from 3,185 to 6,430. By 1910, the population nearly doubled again, growing to 10,231. The growing number of residents was largely due to the increasing number of jobs available through the federal government—generated first by the First World War (1914-1918), later the New Deal agencies, and then World War II (1941-1945)—as well as the growth of supporting service industries and retail establishments. By 1920, when it was renamed Arlington County, the county had a population of 16,040. The population of Arlington County increased by 2107% for the period of 1900 to 1950, demonstrating the explosive growth in the county.<sup>12</sup> The African American population of Arlington increased during this period as well, but at a much slower rate than did the white population. From 1900 to 1950, the African American population increased by only 4,050 people, while during the same period the white population increased by nearly 125,000 people.<sup>13</sup> This disparity—attributable at least in part to prejudicial housing practices in the county—was characteristic of the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

**Development of the George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments**

In March 1865, the Congress of the United States established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to help African American citizens make the transition from servitude to freedom, and from wartime to peace. In addition to the provision of assistance to African Americans, the Bureau maintained a number of settlements throughout the South and bordering states. These settlements began under the wartime supervision of the Union army, and were managed by the Quartermaster Department.

Perhaps the most famous of the Freedman's Villages was the community founded in 1863 on the grounds of Arlington House in Virginia. After the Arlington estate was confiscated by the U.S. government, the Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton set aside a portion of the property to create a Freedman's Village, while a 210-acre portion of the tract became Arlington National Cemetery at the request of Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs. The Navy Annex, Henderson Hall, part of Arlington Cemetery, and the complex system of roads traversing the area now occupy the site of the village.

With the eventual phasing out of the village later in the 1890s, residents relocated to nearby communities, such as Nauck, Butler-Holmes, East Arlington, Queen City, South Washington, and Johnson's Hill. The 1879 Hopkins Map documents development along the Columbia Turnpike—

9 "The new Virginia Constitution, which went into effect on May 1, 1870, made a complete change in the form of local county government. . . . a single judge County Court was given jurisdiction over criminal and civil process, and a Board of Supervisors became the governing body. Each county was divided into not fewer than three districts each of which had its own officers and independent powers. Cities with a population of 5,000 or more were excluded from any district. Alexandria was such a city and thenceforth was no longer part of the County." C.B. Rose, *Arlington County, Virginia: A History* (Arlington, VA: Arlington Historical Society, 1976) 125-126.

10 Rose, *Arlington County*, 144.

11 Griffith M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Fifteen Miles around Washington including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1879) 66-67.

12 University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, *United States Historical Census Data Browser* [online] (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1998 [cited 25 July 2003]) <<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/>>.

13 University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, *United States Historical Census Data Browser*.

14 C.M. Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976) 398-399. Green refers to restrictive housing covenants, and difficulties for African Americans in acquiring bank loans.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 8 Page 8**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
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chartered in 1808 to connect the Long Bridge over the Potomac to the Little River Turnpike—including the expanding intersection at Arlington Ridge Road. Near the tollgate at the intersection of the Georgetown-Alexandria Pike (now South Arlington Ridge Road), and Columbia Pike, a small village center developed, becoming known as Johnson's Hill, named for J.R. Johnston. Johnston owned eighty-five acres in the area, which he subdivided into four parcels, three of which were sold to former slaves: Harry W. Gray, Harrison Green, and Emmanuel Jackson.<sup>15</sup> Harrison Green, and his son Elhaney Green, were both farmers, and owned the plot of land where the Carver Apartments now stand.<sup>16</sup> Currently known as Arlington View, the area historically known as Johnson's Hill grew from rural farmland, located on a hill overlooking the Arlington estate, to a middle-class neighborhood populated by numerous other freed slaves, many of whom became important leaders in the development of Arlington County.<sup>17</sup>

Queen City and East Arlington were neighborhoods located adjacent to the Freedman's Village site, and absorbed a substantial portion of the population at its dissolution. East Arlington was a large polygonally-shaped neighborhood located to the north of Columbia Pike, and to the east of a now-vanished section of Arlington Ridge Road, east of what is now the Navy Annex. Queen City was one portion of East Arlington, but was subdivided separately, and was thus known as a distinct neighborhood. It was also called the Mt. Olive Subdivision, named after the Mt. Olive Baptist Church, which had owned the land.<sup>18</sup> These neighborhoods were primarily African American and working class; most of the male inhabitants were listed as "laborer" in the 1930 Census. Some of the other professions listed included mechanic, fireman, truck driver, housekeeper, and laundress.<sup>19</sup>

The 1939 commencement of World War II in Europe was momentous for Arlington County, and had long-ranging implications for its African American population. The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 made the point, already realized by the leaders of the United States War Department, that a central headquarters was necessary. The War Department occupied nearly twenty widely-scattered buildings, including "tempo" located on the National Mall, which inhibited the Department's efficiency.<sup>20</sup> The government settled on locating the 5.1-million-square-foot

15 Louie Estrada. "Arlington View: A Sense of History." *The Washington Post* June 1993: 18 pars. [Online. Internet 15 May 2003. Available: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/counties/arlington/longterm/wwlive/view.htm>.]

16 United States Department of Commerce, Census Office *United States Census: 1880, State: Virginia, County: Alexandria, Township: Jefferson District, Enumeration District 7, Supervisor's District 4, Sheet 27: Harrison Green* (Washington, DC, 1880). Also: United States Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920-Population, State: Virginia, County: Alexandria, Township: Jefferson District, Enumeration District 14, Supervisor's District 8, Sheet 2B, Johnson's Hill: Alhaney Green* (Washington, DC, 1920). Also: United States Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule, State: Virginia, County: Arlington, Township: Jefferson District, Enumeration District 7-15, Supervisor's District 2, Sheet 8A, Columbia Pike: Alhaneyna Greene* (Washington, DC, 1930). In the 1920 Census, both Elhaney Green and his wife are listed as laborers at the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. In 1930, Mr. Green's occupation was listed as farmer. In the 1930 Census, Mr. Green and his family received the notation "neg." in the "Color or Race" field, thus indicating that they were African American.

17 For more information on African American history in Arlington, see also: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Harry W. Gray House*, by Jennifer B. Hallock/EHT Traceries, Inc., Washington, D.C., 2003. Also: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*, by Kristie Baynard/EHT Traceries, Inc., Washington, D.C., 2003.

18 Arlington Historical Society, *Images of America: Arlington* (Charleston, SC: Acadia Publishing, 2000) 34, 72. The Mt. Olive Baptist Church was founded in 1874 by members of the Old Bell Church, the church of the Freedman's Village. *African American History in Arlington, Virginia: A Guide to the Historic Sites of a Long and Proud Heritage* (Arlington, VA: Arlington Convention and Visitors Service, Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Black Heritage Museum of Arlington, n.d.) 6, 14. See also: Rose, *Arlington County*, 124-125.

19 United States Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule, State: Virginia, County: Arlington, Township: East Arlington* (Washington, DC: 1930).

20 Alfred Goldberg, *The Pentagon: The First Fifty Years* (Washington, DC: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1992) 14. For more information on the Pentagon, refer also to: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form—Nomination Form for Federal Properties: Pentagon Office Building Complex*, by Daniel Koski-Karell (Washington, DC, 1989).

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
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building in Arlington County.<sup>21</sup> Two sites in Arlington were considered for the new structure, and the one finally chosen, in large part by President Franklin Roosevelt, was partly on land already owned by the government.<sup>22</sup> The government acquired much of the rest of the Pentagon site through condemnation proceedings.<sup>23</sup> The neighborhoods of East Arlington and Queen City disappeared under the Pentagon, the Navy Annex, and the tangle of roadways in the area.<sup>24</sup> Ground was broken for the massive office building on September 11, 1941, and construction was finished sixteen months later.<sup>25</sup>

Hundreds of people, mostly African American, were shifted from their homes by the construction of the Pentagon.<sup>26</sup> Many of these residents were re-settled in the Arlington View and Green Valley neighborhoods, initially in trailers, and later in apartment complexes such as the Carver Apartments.<sup>27</sup> The eight multiple dwellings that make up the Carver Apartments were built in Arlington View in 1944-1945 by the federal government for the African American residents who had been displaced at least two years earlier. The Dunbar Apartments were built simultaneously by the federal government in the Green Valley neighborhood for the displaced residents. During the late 1930s, and particularly the war years of the forties, new construction in Arlington County was almost entirely devoted to the construction of duplexes and multiple-family dwelling—including Colonial Village, Fairlington, Buckingham, Fillmore Gardens, Dunbar Apartments, and Carver Apartments—with the garden apartment the dominant type.<sup>28</sup> In the case of the Carver Apartments, prominent African American architect Albert I. Cassell was chosen to be the designer. At the time, Cassell was in the midst of another high-profile African American garden apartment project in Washington, D.C., the Mayfair Mansions Apartments.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Goldberg, *The Pentagon*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> “The land assembled for the Pentagon-to-be came from several different holdings of which the largest were the southern end of Arlington Farms (57 acres), the Quartermaster depot site (80 acres), and the Washington-Hoover Airport (146.5 acres). The northern side of the Pentagon rests on Arlington Farms land; the southern and western sides are on Quartermaster land; and the eastern side is on land from the airport. In addition, a number of other parcels of land, 160 or more, many of them privately owned, were taken to provide for the complex of roads and other facilities required.” Goldberg, *The Pentagon*, 34.

<sup>23</sup> “Condemnation proceedings affected as many as 150 homes and a number of small commercial tracts in the path of roads and approaches, particularly in the Columbia Pike area to the south of the building.” Goldberg, *The Pentagon*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Maps of all of these Arlington neighborhoods can be seen on *Franklin’s Original “Han-dy Size” Property Atlas, Including Territory Embraced in Franklin’s Standard Atlas: Arlington County, Virginia* (Philadelphia: Franklin Survey Company, 1938), plate 15.

<sup>25</sup> Goldberg, *The Pentagon*, 44.

<sup>26</sup> ““They sent out notices to us and they told us we would have to move and they paid us, but I don’t think they paid enough for anything,” said [Dorothy] Rich, who was a young teenager at the time. ‘We were just depressed and sad, and didn’t feel that it was fair.’ [Ruth] Shanklin, who was almost 30, remembers her father-in-law’s agony at the news. ‘I remember his going crazy almost because they were taking his home,’ she said.” Ann O’Hanlon, “Resolutely Staying Put: Queen City Celebrates 50-Year Anniversary,” *Washington Post*, 4 November 1999, *Virginia Weekly*, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Alfred Goldberg asserts the generosity of the government in its treatment of these dislocated residents: “Families required to move from their homes on very short notice were offered the use of nearby trailers for a reasonable period of time at no cost to them.” Goldberg, *The Pentagon*, 34. C.B. Rose states that several apartment complexes were built at this same time by the government, and that they were segregated by race: “The George Pickett, Shirley, J.E.B. Stuart, and Jubal Early Homes were for whites; the George Washington Carver and Paul Dunbar Homes were for Blacks.” Rose, *Arlington County*, 206.

<sup>28</sup> For more information about garden apartments, refer to: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia: 1934-1954*, by Simone Monteleone Moffett/EHT Tracerics, Inc. (Washington, D.C., 2002). See also: Robert Wojtowicz, *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism: Eutopian Theories for Architecture and Urban Planning* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Also: Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981).

<sup>29</sup> For more information, see: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Mayfair Mansions Apartments*, by Arthur M. Reynolds, Sr. (Washington, D.C., 1989).

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In 1949, the federal government first offered to sell the housing to Arlington County, and then, when the county declined the offer, to the tenants.<sup>30</sup> After struggling to find a loan to buy the property, the tenants found a lender in the James W. Rouse Company, which issued a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan in the amount of \$123,000 for the purchase of the apartments.<sup>31</sup> The cooperative formed by the tenants paid off that loan in 1974.<sup>32</sup> Many of the original residents of the complex, including those moved from their homes in East Arlington and Queen City in 1940-1941, still live at the Carver Apartments.<sup>33</sup> The Carver Apartments was, and remains, a working-class African American complex.

**Architect: Albert I. Cassell (1895-1969)**

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<sup>30</sup> “The Federal Government wanted to dispose of the projects and offered them to the County. A condition of sale was that the units be used for low income families living in sub-standard housing. The County declined the offer. Acceptance would have entailed establishment of a local Housing Authority, a proposal that aroused bitter debate in Arlington. Part of the Carver Homes and the Paul Dunbar Homes [in Green Valley] had been built to a higher, more permanent standard than the others. These were sold to tenants.” Rose, *Arlington County*, 207.

<sup>31</sup> O’Hanlon, “Resolutely Staying Put,” 2.

<sup>32</sup> O’Hanlon, “Resolutely Staying Put,” 2. For more information on the history of cooperatives, see: Richard Siegler and Herbert J. Levy, “Brief History of Cooperative Housing,” *NAHC—National Association of Housing Cooperatives* [online] (Washington, DC: National Association of Housing Cooperatives, 2003 [cited 20 August 2003]) <<http://www.coophousing.org/HistoryofCo-ops.pdf>>.

<sup>33</sup> O’Hanlon, “Resolutely Staying Put,” 2.



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Albert I. Cassell, the architect of the Carver Apartments, was a prominent African American architect practicing in the Washington region through the middle years of the twentieth century. He is primarily known for his association with Howard University, where he was an associate professor in the Department of Architecture between 1920 and 1925.<sup>34</sup> Cassell was also responsible for Howard's master plan, building a range of dormitories and academic buildings between 1925 and 1938, the most prominent of which was Founders Library.<sup>35</sup>

Albert I. Cassell was born in Towson, Maryland in 1895, educated in Baltimore, and was the second African American graduate of the Cornell School of Architecture (1919).<sup>36</sup> From Cornell, he went on to practice and teach at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. In 1921, Cassell moved to teach at the new School of Architecture at Howard University in Washington, D.C. While at Howard, Cassell worked to develop the architectural program at what had been the School of Applied Science, as well as design a twenty-year master plan for the campus itself.<sup>37</sup> Cassell's first structure on the Howard campus was the Home Economics and Dining Hall building, which was constructed in 1921.<sup>38</sup> The final building Cassell designed for Howard, in 1939, was Founders Library, an adaptation of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Cassell designed the library to be the

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<sup>34</sup> John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1997) 78. See also: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Mayfair Mansions Apartments*, by Arthur M. Reynolds, Sr. (Washington, D.C., 1989) Continuation Sheet, section 8, page 11.

<sup>35</sup> Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 78. Also: Benjamin Forgey, "Built of Stern Stuff: Howard U.'s Homage to Its Solid Architect," *Washington Post*, 25 November 1995, Style section, B1, B6.

<sup>36</sup> *Mayfair Mansions*, Continuation Sheet, section 8, page 10. Wells and Dalton, *The Virginia Architects*, 78. Also: Forgey, "Built of Stern Stuff," B1.

<sup>37</sup> *Mayfair Mansions*, Continuation Sheet, section 8, pages 10-11.

<sup>38</sup> Harrison Mosely Etheridge, "The Black Architects of Washington, D.C.: 1900 to Present" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1979) 53.

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
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focus of the campus.<sup>39</sup> This building was completed after Cassell's departure in 1937 from Howard after an acrimonious and very public rift with the president of the university.<sup>40</sup>

Cassell was involved in many projects in the Washington area – and beyond – in addition to his work at Howard. One of the most prominent of these projects was the design for the Mayfair Mansions Apartments, constructed between 1942 and 1946, at the same time as the Carver Apartments. Mayfair Mansions is extant, and is located in Northeast Washington, D.C. It is “significant because it is the first privately developed multi-family housing project to be insured by the Federal Housing Administration for occupancy by black tenants.”<sup>41</sup> The development of Mayfair Mansions was a joint effort between Albert I. Cassell and Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux, who wanted to provide housing for the District of Columbia's African American population.<sup>42</sup> Cassell designed the Mayfair Mansions as a garden apartment complex with Colonial Revival details.

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<sup>39</sup> Etheridge, “Black Architects,” 54.

<sup>40</sup> “The rift apparently stemmed from two incidents: Cassell's alleged foiling of the University's attempt to mortgage the campus for \$160,000 in 1931 and ‘the moral issue of President Mordecai Johnson's retaining of the head janitor despite admitted payroll padding on the head janitors part.’” Etheridge, “Black Architects,” 56. Quoting Thomas S. Battle, “Albert I. Cassell and Howard University” (paper presented at the Third Annual Conference of Washington Historical Studies, Washington, D.C., January 23, 1976) 4. “the four-and-a-half year controversy resulted in a moral victory for Cassell when Judge Aukam made no financial reward to Howard, but awarded \$19,000 to Cassell who eventually settled for \$3,000 prior to a planned appeal by Howard University.” Etheridge, “Black Architects,” 58.

<sup>41</sup> *Mayfair Mansions*, Section 8.

<sup>42</sup> “Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux was a local black minister who was an international radio evangelist.” *Mayfair Mansions*, Continuation Sheet, section 8, page 7.

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Arlington, Virginia

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5)	<u>18</u>	<u>3/20/126</u>	<u>43/03/313</u>
6)	<u>18</u>	<u>3/19/985</u>	<u>43/03/297</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

The George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments sit on a 3.35-acre plot located approximately three miles from the District of Columbia, in the Arlington View neighborhood in southern Arlington County, Virginia. The site is bounded on the west by South Rolfe Street, on the east by South Queen Street, and on the south by 13th Road South. The Carver Apartments are approximately a quarter of a mile south of Columbia Pike, a major route through Arlington County that stretches westward to Fairfax County, Virginia.

Boundary Justification

The Carver Apartments district boundary corresponds to the boundaries of the property owned by the George Washington Carver Mutual Homes Association since they purchased it from the United States Government in 1949.

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**George Washington Carver Cooperative Apartments (VDHR File Number 000-9417)  
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All photographs are of:

**GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER COOPERATIVE APARTMENTS  
Arlington County, Virginia  
VDHR File Number: 000-9417  
E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc., photographer**

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**All negatives are stored with the Department of Historic Resources:**

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1300-1310 South Rolfe Street, 1312-1322  
South Rolfe Street  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-21  
**PHOTO:** 1 of 7

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1344-1354 South Rolfe Street, 1356-1362  
South Rolfe Street  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-20  
**PHOTO:** 2 of 7

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1344-1354 South Rolfe Street  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-19  
**PHOTO:** 3 of 7

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1707-1717 13th Road South  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-25  
**PHOTO:** 4 of 7

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1707-1717 13th Road South  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-24  
**PHOTO:** 5 of 7

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1324-1334 South Rolfe Street, 1344-1354  
South Rolfe Street  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-23  
**PHOTO:** 6 of 7

**DATE:** June 2003  
**VIEW OF:** 1340 South Rolfe Street  
**NEG. NO.:** 18737-22  
**PHOTO:** 7 of 7